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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 003232

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [SU](#) [FR](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: DARFUR: FRENCH POSITION ON NATO ROLE

REF: STATE 87278

Classified By: CDA Alejandro D. Wolff for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Drawing on reftel points, Charge raised a possible NATO role in Darfur with MFA Political Director Stanislas de Laboulaye May 11. Charge said French opposition to a NAC meeting with AU SYG Konare was not consistent with FM Barnier's assurances that Paris would not object to a NATO role in Sudan. We had heard reports that Konare might be rethinking his visit to Brussels, perhaps because of concerns about getting between the EU and NATO. This would be a setback to both organizations. Laboulaye, who said he was not aware of French opposition to a NAC meeting with Konare, seemed surprised to hear that Konare was considering canceling his trip to Brussels. Referring to FM Barnier's May 2 assurance to the Secretary that France would not block a NATO role, Laboulaye recalled that Barnier had also stated that the GoF had been unenthusiastic, but that Konare's letter requesting NATO assistance had changed the situation.

2. (C) On the issue of Konare meeting with the NAC, Laboulaye wondered whether such a meeting was essential, suggesting that a meeting with NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer would suffice. Charge countered that a meeting with the NAC would be both appropriate given Konare's stature and more practical since it would enable Permreps to understand directly from Konare what was needed. Laboulaye said that if Konare met with the NAC, he should also meet with the EU PSC. Charge said we had no problem with that. Laboulaye, who stated that he had no religion on the matter, indicated a NAC meeting should not be a problem. He said he was confident this was the view of the French government, but he would check once more.

3. (C) Laboulaye telephoned Charge subsequently to confirm that France had no problem with a NAC-Konare meeting. He reiterated, however, French understanding that Konare had not requested such a meeting. Charge said that should not deter NATO from offering it.

4. (U) KHARTOUM MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.
WOLFF